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C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 000391

DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/AF, DS/TIA/ITA, DS/IP/SPC/SO, DRL,
AF/RSA, AND AF/E

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/05/2029

TAGS: MOPS PGOV PREL PINS ASEC ER

SUBJECT: ERITREAN GOVERNMENT RELOCATES MILITARY TRAINING
CENTER

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for Reason 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) The Eritrean government (GSE) is reportedly planning to relocate its Sawa training center to a newer facility located in the vicinity of Massawa along the Red Sea, according to a reliable embassy source. NOTE: All 12th grade students in Eritrea report to Sawa in western Eritrea to conduct military training during their last year of school. END NOTE. During this last session from summer 2008 until spring 2009, approximately 50% of the students fled Sawa into Sudan, this source claimed. The GSE is concerned about this high percentage of students fleeing the country and is constructing a new facility on the Red Sea coast to make it more difficult for students to flee. One Western diplomat told RSO that if the facility is not completed by spring 2010, they will cancel the upcoming 12th grade military training for the upcoming class.

¶2. (C) Post continues to receive reports of Eritreans from all facets of society who are fleeing in droves due to poor economic prospects in Eritrea and forced, endless national service.

McMULLEN